

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) A process of producing a food product by heat-treating a food material containing reducing sugars, glucose and fructose, comprising the step of blanching the food material, wherein the blanching step comprises subjecting the food material to an active blanching medium under blanching conditions in a blanching section to produce spent blanching medium, conducting a stream of the spent blanching medium to a desugaring section which is separated from the blanching section, withdrawing the reducing sugars glucose and fructose from the spent blanching medium to produce an active blanching medium using a sugar-withdrawing means comprising one or more micro-organisms capable of converting glucose and fructose, wherein the micro-organisms are selected from the bacterial genera *Lactobacillus*, *Streptococcus*, *Oenococcus*, *Leuconostoc* and *Zymomonas*, recycling a stream of active blanching medium to the blanching section, and reusing the active blanching medium.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Cancelled)
4. (Cancelled)
5. (Cancelled)
6. (Currently amended) The process according to claim 5 1, wherein the micro-organisms are selected from the species *Lactobacillus gasseri*, *Lactobacillus manihotivorans*, *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Streptococcus thermophilus* and *Zymomonas mobilis*.
7. (Cancelled)
8. (Cancelled)
9. (Cancelled)
10. (Cancelled)
11. (Cancelled)

12. (Currently amended) The process according to claim 1, wherein the reducing sugar content of the food material after blanching is less than 0.25 wt. %.
13. (Currently amended) A process of producing a food product by heat-treating a food material containing the reducing sugars glucose and fructose, comprising the step of blanching the food material, wherein the blanching step comprises subjecting the food product to an active blanching medium under blanching conditions in a blanching section to produce spent blanching medium, conducting a stream of the spent blanching medium to a desugaring section which is separated from the blanching section, withdrawing the reducing sugars glucose and fructose and asparagines from the spent blanching medium to produce an active blanching medium using a sugar and asparagine withdrawing means comprising one or more micro-organisms capable of converting glucose and fructose, wherein the micro-organisms are selected from the bacterial genera *Lactobacillus*, *Streptococcus*, *Oenococcus*, *Leuconostoc* and *Zymomonas*, recycling a stream of the active blanching medium to the blanching section, and reusing the active blanching medium.
14. (Cancelled)
15. (Cancelled)
16. (Previously presented) The process according to claim 13, wherein the food product is a potato product.
17. (Cancelled)
18. (Cancelled)
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Cancelled)
21. (Cancelled)
22. (Cancelled)
23. (Cancelled)
24. (Cancelled)

25. (Cancelled)
26. (Cancelled)
27. (Cancelled)
28. (Cancelled)
29. (Cancelled)